Section 3: Other Contacts Within the Sasembata District

628 As soon as we move beyond the closely allied villages, there is a sharp distinction between the behaviour appropriate with kinsmen or regular partners and friends resident in those villages, and the far more cautious and formal behaviour appropriate when dealing with all others. There are far fewer transactions between Sivepe and Isoge or Kendata than with Garombi or Kongohambo, and other close villages. But I believe that the frequency of such contacts fluctuates according to contingencies. For instance, Isoge and Sivepe are now expected to cooperate in both church and local government council activities. This is definitely a somewhat [178] novel experience. One clear example can be given of the changes in attitude this has produced over the last 16 years.

When the Sasembata mission station was built in 1952-1953, 797 all the villages contained in the parish collaborated. Miss White's 794 diaries show how this cooperation was organised. Miss White, who 628 was in charge of the station, arranged with leaders from each of the villages what tasks they would be responsible for. For instance, the nearby Sasembata village would build the teacher's house, Garombi and Isoge would finish the hospital ward, Sivepe and Binduta would pull down the old pre-eruption Standard 1-3 classroom building, Duve and Totogota would finish the standard 4 building, Kongohambo build another schoolroom while Hamburata would cut and saw the wood for the desks. (28 December, 1952) Evidently, each group would work one day a week--and each group on a different day, as I understand.

653 The hospital building was duly finished in bush materials 628 and in 1966, while I was in the field, the time had come to pull it down and renew it. The Australian teacher in charge of the station was unable to organise this work. There was, however, a [759] Papuan medical assistant in charge of the hospital who was efficient and popular. On the occasion he treated the sore leg of a Sasembata man who was a carpenter. The man offered to build the assistant a "house," i.e., a hospital. He collected 20 men from Isoge, Garombi, Sivepe, Binduta, Hamburata and his own village. Together they built the hospital in a few weeks, working together every day. Often there were more than 20. When it was finished, he did not think it was strong enough. It was pulled down and rebuilt with more substantial studs.

The main difference between the building programmes of 1952 and 1966 lies in the manner in which the work was organised. In 1952, the largest effective cooperating group was the village. The mission was able to draw on the services of several villages, but only if they worked separately. In 1966, an Orokaiva builder, drawn from one village, was able to control and lead the work of a group recruited from all the villages of the Northwestern half of the parish acting as a coordinated team.

[77 65] instituting numerous training programmes for the development of skills hitherto unknown to Papuans, and by setting up organisations [64] in which Papuans wield a limited amount of political and administrative responsibility. It suffices, for my present purpose, to enumerate modern roles, performed by Papuans, with which the people of Sivepe came into contact during the year of my field study.

[799] In the church, Papuans now play not only the role of mission teacher, but also of priest (as Fr. Albert McLaren) and Bishop (as the Most Rev. George Ambo). Fr. Albert was the priest of the local parish, while the Bishop paid one visit to the district during the year, namely for the consecration of the church at Duve, a great formal occasion attended by at least 1,000 people, from the whole of the Sasembata district.

[825] Village constables exist no longer, but their place has been taken by the Local Government Council. Two of the councillors were regular visitors at Sivepe; the sanitary inspector appointed by the council, who lived at Garombi, came even more frequently, while many Sivepe people had occasion, during the year, to visit the Council chambers at Higaturu, where all officials are Papuan, with the exception of one European who acts as Advisory Officer to the Council and also as Magistrate for Native Court cases. Locally we had an officer named "Committee," which meant that he was a member of a committee appointed by the local councillor to enforce council regulations in the villages. Each village has one committee member whose tasks are not unlike those of the village constable, though the concept of the role is rather different, and will be discussed below.

[759] While the only medical role allotted to Papuans at the time of the eruption was that of orderly, nowadays there are Papuan physicians, two of them in the Northern District. One of them is medical officer for the district and the other, a woman, is attached to the hospital at Saiho. An increasing number of Papuans are being trained as Assistant Medical Officer, a five-year course. One of the graduates was attached to the mission hospital and aid post at Sasembata. Aid posts have been established by the government in many Orokaiva villages and manned by aid post orderlies who were trained in the Saiho Aid Post Training School. Inonda village is served by an orderly trained under this scheme (stationed at Hohota, three miles away), but the training scheme has been discontinued in favour of a more efficient scheme. The training of Papuan nurses started in 1958 while nursing aide training has started more recently. In addition to general training, these nurses are given an intensive course in maternal and child health.

[875] The same movement into senior statuses was characteristic of Papuan educational personnel. First, the training given to mission teachers before the eruption was in the main ecclesiastical, while in the Northern District in 1966, 35% had been through at least one year of formal teacher training; a smaller number had obtained a

628 I found them elsewhere among the Orokaiva, it naturally became no easier for the mission station to lead the village.

During the time I was at Hohorita, there was no local medical 758 service because the officer appointed by the Health Department was a 759 Sangara who insisted that a house should be built for him before he arrived. (Orokaiva are bound by law to do such work, in payment for [653] government services rendered.) His kinsmen at Hohorita thought that if he wanted a house, he should build it himself. The medical, however, was in no hurry at all to go home; he stayed at his previous post for almost a year after he should have been transferred. Hohorita complained to the Health authorities that they had no medical; they found that unless they built the house, no medical would be provided but they would have to go to Saiho for service. Finally they yielded. This was far from being a case of anomie: it was a battle about the status to be granted to public officials at Hohorita.

653 In Sivepo, nobody would have questioned this status; they would have built a house at once for any public official who would have wanted to live there. But then, such a person would be bound to be a stranger, not a person "like themselves." When a village has produced a dozen or so public officials of one sort or another, the question begins to look different: what is so special about these people that we have to build houses for them? Furthermore, once upon a time, the Sangara working timetable was rather flexible, but with cashcropping on the Hohorita scale, and long walking distances between home and work, the Hohorita people were rather busy earning money from coffee. Time had become an economic resource.

This was a frequent subject of mild argument between me and the other expatriates. The expatriates used to complain that the Orokaiva were no longer willing to do any work (i.e., perform free services such as I am now discussing). They thought that if the Orokaiva were to advance economically, they would need to work much harder. I used to tease the other expatriates by saying that this growing reluctance to do free work for the government (roads, houses for officials, etc.) was evidence for the success of the economic development policy the expatriates claimed to be promoting. They thought this to be a sick joke.

In an earlier chapter, I already referred to an unusual fore- 173 shortening of Orokaiva history practised by Sangara informants of today. It is certainly remarkable that, according to Sangara, the Orokaiva only began to make feasts <u>after</u> the time of European contact, because earlier they could not grow enough food to hold them. Statements of this sort were made in two places (Soubou, Hohorita) by elders sitting together in groups and instructing me. I have already explained how such statements fit the traditional <u>structure</u> of Orokaiva history: original time / culture established by culture heroes / present day. As the coming of the Europeans occurred more than two generations ago, this event would seem to have been confused with the coming of the [731] culture heroes. When I did, in a very innocent way, express my